Letters to the editor
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Historian Michael Beschloss, properly denouncing Oliver Stone's commercialization and exploitation of the JFK assassination (Outlook, 1/5/92), himself exploits it for more of his faulted JFK-bashing and in the course of this trivializes "the crime of the century" and the people's sorrow, errs and flaunts his own carelessness and ignorance.

He attributes the deep concern of the people after all these years to "parlor games," to straining "to find superficial similarities" with the Lincoln assassination and to "Agatha Christie-like...scenarios."

Consistent with this indecent invention, more evil in its way, from a professional historian, than Oliver Stone's, is his dismissal of the most subversive crime in a society like ours as "a crime that made little difference."

Any assassination of any president nullifies the entire system of our society.

Pretending scholarship when there is no taint of it in his indulgence of the Kennedy-hating he has commercialized so successfully, he says, "(o)ne need only read through Kennedy's FBI file (now in the FBI archives)..." There is no single FBI Kennedy file, there are many; and if they remain in the "archives" they cannot be read, they are strictly withheld. Those that can be read are in its public reading room.

He then attributes to this "file" what is not and cannot be there, "disturbing connections to Lee Harvey Oswald and Jack Ruby" of a wide variety of those with most of whom neither had an established "connection."

Beschloss says of JFK's statements to associates that he would be freer to make decisions that might be unpopular after reelection, "such a man-the-consequences approach is absent from every other major decision of Kennedy's public career." This is false and comes from his own belief in the hatred he preaches.

To mention just a few, sending Averill Harriman to negotiate the limited test-ban agreement, attempting to reduce military expenditures and cancelling the contract to build Blue Streak missiles for Great Britain. Until the public accepted it, he certainly

had to fear the consequences of the solution to the Cuba missile crisis he proposed to Khrushchev.

I know from more than 20,000 unsolicited letters from deeply concerned Americans that, rather than regarding the JFK assassination as a "parlor game," they are troubled because ~~they believe that~~ such a crime was ~~could be~~ perpetrated in this country without a satisfactory investigation and explanation of it by their government.

They should also be as troubled by the Beschlosses as by the Stones, all those who seek to further personal agendas or to exploit and commercialize the crime in any way.

As war is too important to trust to the generals, so also is our history too important to trust to Beschloss-like historians.

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